

IN THE CLAIMS

The following claim listing replaces previous listings of claims. Claims 1-5, 8-12 and 15-20 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 24 and 25 are new.

1-5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) A cobalt compound suitable for use in an alkaline storage battery, obtained by baking a cobalt hydroxide powder in an atmosphere containing oxygen at a temperature in the range of 90°C to 140°C.

7. (Original) The cobalt compound according to claim 6, wherein the cobalt hydroxide powder is made of a solid solution of cobalt hydroxide containing at least one element selected from nickel, zinc, iron, manganese, aluminum, calcium, magnesium, strontium, barium, lithium, sodium, yttrium, and ytterbium.

8-12. (Canceled)

13. (Withdrawn) A method for manufacturing a cobalt compound suitable for use in an alkaline storage battery, comprising baking a cobalt hydroxide powder in an atmosphere containing oxygen at a temperature in the range of 90°C to 140°C.

14. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 13, wherein the cobalt hydroxide powder is made of a solid solution of cobalt hydroxide containing at least one element selected from nickel, zinc, iron, manganese, aluminum, calcium, magnesium, strontium, barium, lithium, sodium, yttrium, and ytterbium.

15-20. (Canceled)

21. (Original) A positive electrode plate suitable for use in an alkaline storage battery including an electrolytic solution, the positive electrode plate comprising a conductive support and an active material paste supported by the support,

wherein the active material paste contains nickel hydroxide, the cobalt compound according to claim 6, and a cobalt compound having a higher solubility in the electrolytic solution than a solubility of the cobalt compound according to claim 6.

22. (Original) The positive electrode plate according to claim 21, wherein the cobalt compound having a higher solubility in the electrolytic solution is at least one selected from cobalt metal, cobalt hydroxide, cobalt monoxide, and cobalt sulfate.

23. (Original) The positive electrode plate according to claim 21, wherein the cobalt compound having a higher solubility in the electrolytic solution comprises a solid solution of cobalt hydroxide and at least one element selected from nickel, zinc, iron, manganese, aluminum, calcium, magnesium, strontium, barium, lithium, sodium, yttrium, and ytterbium.

24. (New) The cobalt compound according to claim 6, having a solubility of not more than 1  $\mu\text{g/g}$  in a potassium hydroxide aqueous solution with a specific gravity of 1.3.

25. (New) The positive electrode plate according to claim 21, wherein the cobalt compound according to claim 6 has a solubility of not more than 1  $\mu\text{g/g}$  in a potassium hydroxide aqueous solution with a specific gravity of 1.3.